

America. My attitude is, anytime we put one of our troops in harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best training, and the best possible equipment. This Nation will spend what it takes to win the war on terror and to protect the American people.

About a quarter of the deficit was caused by the tax relief. But the tax relief is helping us recover from the recession. It was needed. It was needed to make this economy grow. And as the economy grows, more revenues come into the Treasury. The best way to cut down the deficit—and I've got a plan to reduce it in half in 5 years—is for Congress to set priorities and not overspend.

Discretionary spending prior to my arrival was increasing at 8.7 percent. Working with fine Senators like Dick Lugar, we've got discretionary spending down during this budget cycle to 4 percent.

There is no question that we've been challenged. But those challenges came to the right people. I have been so proud of our country. We are a country that is determined and strong and tough when we need to be tough and compassionate when we need to be compassionate. We've overcome a lot. We've overcome war, attacks on our country, recessions, corporate scandals. And yet we're still strong. We're vibrant. We're a great nation. We're a great nation because of our ideals and our beliefs. We believe in human dignity. We believe everybody has worth. We believe in freedom and the promise of freedom.

Ours is a nation dedicated to a world of peace, and we will use our strength to achieve peace. And ours is a nation dedicated to uplifting every citizen who lives in this country by giving every person a chance to realize the great promise, the American Dream.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:54 p.m. in the warehouse at Langham Co. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Frank O'Bannon of Indiana; and Cathy Langham, president, John Langham, vice president, finance and administration, and Margaret Langham, vice president, operations, Langham Co. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Indianapolis

September 5, 2003

Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Thanks. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to be back in the great State of Indiana. It's such a beautiful part of America. You know, Vice President Cheney and I did pretty well in the year 2000 in this State. [*Laughter*] The next time around we should do even better, riding on the coattails of my man Mitch.

I want to thank you all for coming tonight. It's a spectacular turnout. What we're doing is laying the groundwork for a strong foundation for what will become a great victory in November of 2004.

I'm going to count on you for energizing the grassroots, for putting up the signs and mailing out the mailers and making the phone calls, for going to the coffee shops and reminding your fellow citizens that ours is a vision that includes everybody. Ours is a hopeful and optimistic vision for everybody who lives in the United States of America.

The political season is coming pretty soon, and I'm loosening up. I'm getting ready, but right now I've got a job to do. And my job is to work on behalf of the people of America. I'm going to continue to work hard to earn the confidence of every American, keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

I appreciate so very much my friend Al Hubbard. I didn't realize he was so articulate. [*Laughter*] Maybe he wasn't. [*Laughter*] But he's a great friend. I want to thank his leadership.

My regret tonight is that the First Lady is not traveling with me. I married above myself. Laura is a remarkable person. I love her dearly. She's doing a great job on behalf of the American people.

I want to thank Bob Graham for his work on this event. I, too, want to thank all the table captains and people who have worked hard to make this an enormous success. I appreciate my friend Mercer Reynolds from

Cincinnati, Ohio, who is the national chairman of the Bush-Cheney campaign. He's a business guy who's taking time out of his life to help us collect enough money to wage a viable campaign in 2004.

I'm honored that members of the congressional delegation are with us. I'm particularly pleased that the chairman is with us, a fine American, a great friend, a person whose counsel and advice I take seriously, Senator Dick Lugar; a person with whom I've played golf and don't intend to play again since he took money from me—[laughter]—Congressman Dan Burton; and another star of the congressional delegation is with us, and that's Congressman Mike Pence.

I'm so pleased we've got State officials with us, Todd Rokita, who is the secretary of state—Mr. Secretary, I'm glad you're here—the State auditor, Connie Nass, is with us; the Republican house leader, Brian Bosma, is with us today, as is State Representative Mike Murphy. I'm so honored you all are taking time out of your day to be here. All politics is local. You have to work to prepare the groundwork for a new Governor who's coming soon, Mitch Daniels.

Speaking about my man Mitch, I noticed a gracious move by David McIntosh in today's newspaper, a move of party unity, a move of serving something greater than himself. David, I appreciate your class act. I'm proud to call you friend, and I'm glad you're here tonight. Thank you for coming.

There are people who have worked in my administration who are here. But one of the more famous Indianapolis citizens is with us tonight, who is serving our country with distinction, a man who understands the Faith-Based Initiative about as well as anybody in the country, and that's my friend Stephen Goldsmith. Thank you for coming, Stephen.

Finally, I'd like to thank Jim Kittle, who is the chairman of the Indiana Republican Party. Get your uniform on, Jim. We're ready to roll. But I appreciate your service. Thank you all again for coming. It's a huge turnout.

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. I believe this

administration is meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We've captured or killed many leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan, in Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people—50 million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. And then the attacks came on our country, and we had scandals in corporate America, and war. All affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

Here is what I know, and here's what I believe, that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or to invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. We understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It is not the Government's money we spend. It's the people's money.

We're returning more money to people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so every single person in this country has a chance to realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I acted. I called for and Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority,

we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We're bringing high standards, and in return for Federal money, strong accountability measures to every public school in America. We believe that every child can learn the basics of reading and math, and we believe every school must teach the basics. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over when it comes to education. We now expect results in every classroom so that not one child in America is left behind.

During these 2½ years, we reorganized our Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Indiana's farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs and manufacturers. We passed budget agreements to help maintain much needed spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people.

The U.S. Congress has shared in these great achievements. I've got a great working relationship with Speaker Hastert and Leader Frist, and I intend to keep it that way. I look forward to working with Members of Congress to change the tone in Washington, DC, to get rid of the needless partisan bickering, and to focus on results, so the people know we have done our job.

And those are the kind of people I've attracted to my administration. I've put together a fantastic administration to serve the American people, good, honorable, decent people. Our Nation has had no finer Vice President than Vice President Dick Cheney. Mother may have a different opinion. *[Laughter]*

In 2½ years, in 2½ years' time, we have come far, but our work is only beginning. I have set great goals worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen—every single cit-

izen—has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the great promise of our land.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home, and we are freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it. Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest. We will not tire. We will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. Free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And I believe that freedom is the right of every person. And I believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world, and when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. I've called upon a fine citizen of Indianapolis to lead an incredibly important mission of human rescue. I want to thank Randy Tobias for his willingness to serve in a great cause.

We face challenges at home as well, and our actions will prove that we're equal to those challenges. The economy is getting better, but so long as people who want to work are looking for a job, I will continue to work to make the conditions for capital investment for the entrepreneurial spirit to remain strong. I care when I hear that people are not working.

As well, we have a duty to make a commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. A few weeks ago, the Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate passed reforms to increase

choices for our seniors and to provide coverage for prescription drugs. Now that the Congress is back from their August break, it is time for the House and the Senate to iron out their differences and to get a bill to my desk. The sooner they get the job done, the sooner American seniors will get the health care they need.

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court, yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. And therefore, medical liability reform is a national issue which requires a national solution. I have proposed a good plan to the Congress. The House of Representatives responded with a good bill. The bill is now stuck in the United States Senate. Senators must realize that no one in America has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

I have a responsibility as your President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members of the Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate. It is time for some Members of the Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

In order to make sure we have economic vitality, the Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation must realize that our electricity grid needs to be modernized. I have proposed a modernization plan to the Congress. We need to promote alternative sources of energy like ethanol. We need to use our technologies to be able to explore for energy here at home in environmentally friendly ways. We need clean coal technology. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, this Nation must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Both the Senate and House have passed an energy

bill. They need to get together and get a bill to my desk.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism. We will apply the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need.

There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through hard work. Congress must work with us to build on the success of welfare reform, to bring work and dignity into more of—in the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the “Citizen Service Act” so that more Americans can serve their community and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring our children, that are caring for the homeless, that are offering hope to the addicted. Our Nation should not fear faith. We should welcome faith into the lives and to help heal our fellow citizens who hurt.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning a home. We will continue to promote policies which will close the minority homeownership gap in America. We want people controlling their own health care plans. We want people in control of their own retirement accounts. And we want more people owning a small business, because we understand in this administration, when an American owns something, he or she has a piece of the future, a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. The old culture of America is changing. The old culture used to say, “If it feels good, do it,” and “If you’ve got a problem, blame somebody else.” It’s changing to a new day in which each of us understands that we’re responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you’re fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you’re responsible for loving your

child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves. The culture of service and the culture of responsibility is growing around us. I started what we call the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to neighbors in need, and the response has been strong. People have heard the call to serve our country.

Our charities are strong. Our faith-based efforts are vibrant. People are being healed because fellow Americans are serving our Nation by loving somebody. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are constantly reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world is seeing the resolve and the courage of America, and I have been privileged to see the compassion and character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:18 p.m. at the Murat Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Indiana gubernatorial candidate Mitchell Daniels, Jr.; Allan B. Hubbard, former chairman, Indiana State Republican Party; former Indiana gubernatorial candidate David McIntosh, who withdrew his candidacy September 4; Stephen Goldsmith, chair, board of directors, Corporation for National and Community Service; and Randall Tobias, nominee

to be Global AIDS Coordinator. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 6, 2003

Good morning. This month, as students across the Nation are starting a new school year, parents, teachers, and principals are starting to notice a difference in America's schools. The No Child Left Behind Act that I signed into law last year is raising standards for student achievement, giving parents more information and more choices, requiring more accountability from schools, and funding education at record levels.

The premise of the No Child Left Behind Act is simple: All children can learn, and the only way to make sure our children are learning is to measure their progress with tests. So the No Child Left Behind Act requires regular testing in the basics of reading and math for every child in every school, starting in the third grade. And the law sets a clear goal for American education: Every child in every school must perform at grade level in reading and math, which are the keys to all learning.

To meet this goal, all 50 States and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have designed accountability plans that have been approved by the Department of Education and are now being put into effect in America's schools. School districts across America are now providing parents with lists of outside tutors who can give extra help at no cost to low-income children in underperforming schools. Those parents also have the option of transferring a son or a daughter out of a school that is not doing the job to a better public school or charter school. And soon every community in America will have report cards on every local public school, so citizens can measure progress and push for reform.

While we're demanding excellence from schools, we're also giving them extra resources to succeed. Since this new law went into effect, 40 States have received a total